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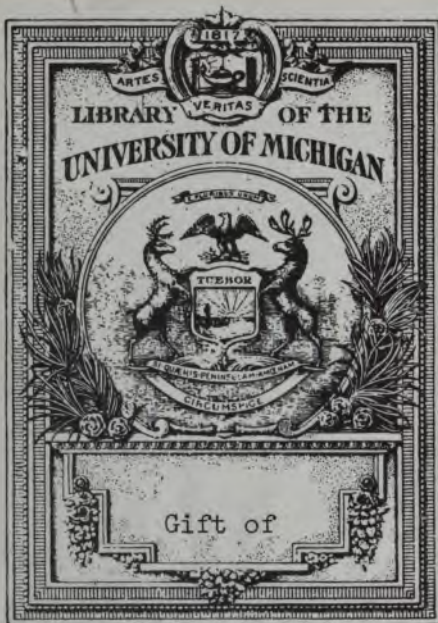
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A CABINET OF JADE



by David O'Neil

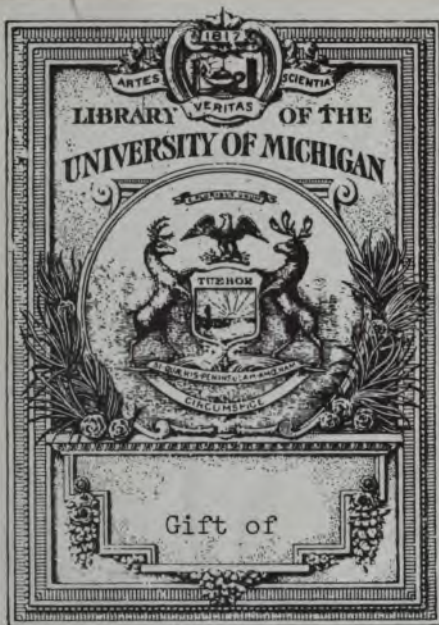


Gift of

Mary E. Cooley

1.2

"With never a thought of the pain it took,
Wandering along, the little book
Came to a presump to look."



Mary E. Cooley

1.25

"With never a thought of the path it took,
Wandering along, the little book
Came to a precipice to look."

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A Cabinet of Faae

A Cabinet of Fads

BY
DAVID O'NEIL



BOSTON
THE FOUR SEAS COMPANY
1918

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0574 ca

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Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

STACKS

GIFT

Mary F. Cooley

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TO BARBARA

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A CABINET OF JADE



QUO VADIS

*When through the thicket
Of life
Your soul-driven eyes
Search the wilderness
Of the night
For life's meaning,
Sullen wind-frayed clouds
The sun has deserted,
Gather around the horizon
And make wilder the night.
But so long as your wildness
Has the path-finding instinct,
Your spirit
Will not whip the thicket
Nor be lost
In the wilderness and the dark.*

MESSAGES

He plodded along
The deep-rutted road,
The old farmer,
Face red as sumach
Wind-colored;
Happy.

The bee-drone hum
Of the wires overhead
Was song and laughter to him,
Yet the wires were laden
With messages of strife, and sorrow,
and sin.

THE UNQUIET

He thought to solve
The unquiet of his heart
In the stillness of solitude;
But the ticking of the clock
Penetrated the silence;
Then song-sparrows sang
In the evergreens at his window;
And there came the ache
Of a heavily loaded wagon
Straining
Up the hill;
And the voices of things in his room
Clamored,
Till he sought the noise of the city
For its silence.

ENSLAVED

With his millions
Came gold handcuffs
Wrought by millions
While he slept;
And when he awakened
He felt them bind.

And the crowd
Envied
His golden bracelets.

WOUNDED VANITY

As charity came
To my door,
Cold frost crystals
Came to my window . . .
They seem like ghosts
Of a frost harvest
That would blind
With crystalized cheer.

COMPLAINT

THE GIVER :

"You hold out a withered arm—
Withered with receiving."

THE BEGGAR :

"You flipped me a coin
As you passed me by;
Why deny me yourself?"

SAID ONE LITTLE ROSE-BUG

"My existence is burdened
With the thought of the life,
Such a drab and deadening life
My brother leads
In that decayed tree."
Said one little rose-bug
Speaking from the heart
Of the rose.

THE ANCIENT BURDEN

We have moved our shop from
The Ghetto,—
Our children must forget
The Ghetto!
Could we but straighten our backs
We might forget
The Ghetto!

A MODERN ORCHARD

Oh! the tragedy
Of pruning souls
To a common height
That the fruit
May be reached
Without straining.

THE MASK

Oh! window panes laughing
At the western sun,
Flushed is the face you turn
To beauty without;
Grey is the face you turn
To beauty within.

A CHARACTER

His life was well ordered,
And monotonously clean
As an orchard with white-washed trees;
But he felt not the cool
Of the sun-splotched wood,
Nor the mad blue brilliance
Of the sea.

RUINS

Eyes once wistfully wild with life,
Now recessed windows
Of a cloister.
Looking in, I saw
But a soul-abandoned ruin
Instinct with memories.

THE DESERT

Our home was called a treeless waste,
We had only a windbreak of evergreens;
Yet the soil was rich.
We turned its richness into gold,
And when the harvest was in
Together our eyes would follow the
 furrows
Till lost in the haze of dreams . . .

And then . . . She died!

On the highest knoll
I transplanted an evergreen
And buried her there . . .

After that, the distances were cruelly
 clear
Along the dreamless furrows.
Our home was a treeless waste.

A PEACE PANTOMIME

Aureoled by a rainbow
The wail has gone
From the fire-swept pines,
Their feet fast in the soil,
Their charred arms beseechingly
Stretched to the sky.
It seemed the ache of a wish
Expressed in voiceless violence.

THE THAMES

Over the Thames
The greying mists
Of industry hang—
Exhaust pipes pulse
The monotone beat of efficiency—
The monotone surge
Of humanity
Toiling in greyness
Silently bearing its burdens,
Like the bridge
Obscured in the mist—
Now and then a shower of sunlight
Sprinkles the water with laughter;
Then all is greyness again.

STARVATION PEAK—EVENING

Towering it stood,
Alone;
Pinnacled in white,
Its great naked torso
Purple against a turquoise sky,
Unpitied in its greatness.

BROODING PINES

Brooding pines,
Why do you wail?
Is it that you are doomed
To live
When death
Takes all
About you?

POVERTY

Is all that we do
Child's play?
Must we build,
And then tear down
For want of blocks
To build again?

THE OAK

Gaunt,
Stripped of leaves,
Death-defiant,
Yet triumphant
In this thought:
There is nothing more to lose.

THE LIME LIGHT

See the giant trees
Of the lowland,
How they lose
Their symmetry
Seeking a place
In the sun.

INHERITANCE

Ancient trees
Complacently usurping
The sunshine;
With forelooking tenderness
Whispering to the saplings
In their palsied shadows:
"There is safety
In our shadow,
But you will wither
In our shadow."

CLOUD SHADOWS

O River
Running to greet the sea!
What are cloud-shadows?
Are they sadness,
Or the vagrant joy
Of the sunlight?

WANTLESSNESS

Out west
Where there is boundless freedom,
Where distances tire the mind,
I saw storm drenched ponies
Dejected, motionless,
With liberty to do,
But not knowing what.

NAKEDNESS

The spirit of wonder
Possessed my dreams,
When summer foliage
Closed me in;

But winter has come,
And laid all bare,
And the mystery of it
Only deepens.

WANDERERS

When we have a day to be idle
Let us not go
As kites that rise
On opposing winds,
Only so far as a string
Will let them.
But let us go
Like errant kites
Where we can dream
Beyond the measure of things.

POPLARS IN SPRING

Joyous spires
Of lyric spirit,
Every branch
A thirsting impulse.

SOLITUDE

Youth!
If there be madness
In your soul,
Go to the mountain solitudes
Where you can grow up
To your madness.

SEA WISDOM

My thoughts are carried to sea,
Upborn by the beach-fire's quivering air.

With the salt sea-wind
They return
And put out my fire,
And its quivering.

MOUNTAIN WISDOM

I am alone,
Full of thoughts
That mount the canyon's face,
And tower naked into peaks,
Seeking The God of Solitude,
Unmindful of storm clouds
That break beneath.

INFINITY

In dreams
I have been swept through space
On a star-hung swing,
Like a silk-worm
On a slender strand,
In a gale.

THE ASCENT

With following the paths that ascend
I have lost the sense of my dwarfish
stature,

Lost the sense of the city's bigness,
As it dwindles to mosaics;
Lost the sense of the teeming streets,
As they dwindle into threads;
Lost the sense of the cultivated foothills,
As they dwindle into a faded quilt—
With following the paths that ascend! . . .

THE HEIGHTS

Alone,
On a high mountain trail,
I drew strength from the sky;
My thoughts went out
Like my shadow at sunset;
I was great as my shadow at sunset.

THE JOURNEY

The journey of life?
It is but the stepping from the valley,
That lies dark and dank in the mist,
To the hill-top,
Bright and clear in the sun.
And for the journey,
Be it one day or a thousand years,
A knapsack filled with love.

TURNING IN

The roads are rough
And tangled,
And the day is hot.
But at nightfall
Roads unravel
And bend down
Into the valley,
And turn in
At a cooling spring.

THE EXPLORER

"Will you go home with me
By the light of my lantern?
The night is dark
And the way is rough."

*"I do not fear the ruts
Of the traveled road,
And your lantern blinds my sight
When I would see
The darkness clearer."*

TRAMPING

Home was where night found us.
The gypsy spirit
Thatched our hearts
Against the homeless winds
Of the plains—
The yawning distances
Of the plains!
And at nightfall
The camp fire
Drew the horizon
Close around
And home was where night found us.

AN EPITAPH

Bending and swaying
Together
Through somber and through singing
 years,
Twin oaks;
They drew life together,
Through root
And branch
As one.

THE PRODIGAL SON

Where the rivers
Ravage the shore,
Willows like mothers
Hold the sloping banks,
And lean
With a tender understanding
Of the stream.

AN ASTRONOMER

On a lone hillside
A Navajo shepherd
Wrapt in his blanket,
Hugged his knees,
Dreamed into the night—
A wisp of a crescent,
A sky full of stars—
In his thought
He was asking:
"Do my lanterns
Shine up to the stars?"

REACTION

A sycamore
Stark,
In the lowlands
Holding at arms' length
The amorous wild vine
That fell away with its bark—
Alive again
To the naked joy
Of a new-born yearning.

VERNAL SHOWERS

At the rude goodness
Of the rain
The flowers wince,
But drink.

FREEDOM

Free am I
As a summer cloud . . .
But I resent
The insistent urge
Of the wind.

THE ANSWER

"O nodding violet!
Why do you seek the shadow
When the sunlight
Would enfold you,
Love-like,
As it does the lily?
And the lily is beautiful."

*"The love I have to give
Withers in the poignancy
Of sunlight."*

SELF-RELIANCE

Trees
Growing between
Hard pavements,
Where tap roots go deep
That they may live
And stand alone,
Crave not the sheltered life
Where trees grow in groves,
And the roots are all
On the surface.

THE RIVER

When you would drive turmoil out,
And let wonder in,
Follow the clearing
To the river;
Drink of the quiet
Of the river,
Till your soul is timed
To the river
Flowing unfettered
By moon and winds,
Broadening to the sea
With never a fear
Of the sea's being full.

MOCKING BIRD

I.

O Mocking bird,
Sing your love-song to me
But never let me know
The words you use in your singing,
For my moods need ever new words
And you may have only a few.

II.

Like the thought of something forgotten,
You came to me out of the night,
And sang your love-song to me;
The little flame you lighted
Burns.

HUMAN CHORDS

He drew life
From the strings,
He gave life
To the strings,
As feeling draws life from words,
Gives life to words;
A fragment of life
Died away with each strain,
But something it awakened
Endures.

FIRST LOVE

At the window she watches,
Down the lane,
His coming shadow.

Like a quiet pool
Flecked by the wind,
Her heart quivers.

FIELD FLOWERS

You who know
The frankness of desire,
You whom the sun loved
Into beauty and fragrance:
Bear my love to her,
Forget the pain
Of the plucking,
Of the bleeding,
That makes you mute and stricken.

REVELATION

Into the valley
The lovers went,
Their souls rife with doubt;
They sat beside
A deep spring-fed pool
Where drifting bubbles were born
To reflect the tall trees
And a clear sweep of the sky . . .
And then to smile away
In ever-widening ripples.

Out of the valley
The lovers went.
Their souls sang
As they climbed
The hill.

A NAVAJO POET

His bronzed face aglow
With the light of a wish;
He whittled arrows,
Sun-vow arrows,
Lean and clean,
For a journey
To the sun . . .

The shavings
He left
For whistling winds
To play with.

YEARNING

Shy little bud,
Fat with life,
Winter is here
This cold morning.
Yet could my breath
Bring forth your beauty
Without the sun,
I would keep you warm,
That you might live until spring.

A VASE OF CHINESE IVORY

In the museum
It had no name:
It was only the life work
Of one almond-eyed heathen—
Just one of a million!
Look closer
And you will see
A soul,
Unique and beautiful.

AMOR OMNIA VINCIT

Love,
How disarming you are!
At your thrust,
The defences around
The citadel of my self
Fall like child fortresses
Of blocks.

THE TOPMOST BRANCH

Night waved her baton
And the singing woods
Were silent ;
But a mocking bird sat
On the topmost branch
And would not be silent—
For his throat ached with love.

REGENERATION

I lie fallow,
Crumbling with the freeze
And the thaw,
Yet I hold you,
As the wind brought you,
Wondrous seed,
And with rain
And sun
And spring
You will ripen
And your roots
Quicken
And deepen in my heart.

PARTING

Off for his work!
Her eyes follow him,
Till he is lost
In the distance! . . .
His thoughts go forward
To the day:
Hers, backward
To the night!

LOVE

The tender hands of the ivy
Wind close to the tomb
Though the tomb be cold;
The tender caress of love
Winds close to the heart
Though the heart be cold.

The winding ivy
• With its myriad hands
Shatters the tomb
And the sun comes in.

REACHES OF THE DESERT

The way is empty
As far as the eye can see!
But the wish of my heart
Lights a moonpath
Across the reaches of the desert
To your adobe doorway,
And my heart feels
The shelter
Of your yearning.

THE NEW DAWN

You may withhold her freedom
As the clouds and rain
Hold back the dawn;
But the east quickens
In her eyes,
And in her heart
Awakens an ecstasy of longing
For the day.

THE WILD GRAPE

Thoughts of you
Have so matted themselves
In my mind
And heart
That all is a tangle,
And you are the lustrous grape,
Wild and sweet,
There intertwined.

LIGHTS

I.

Through the darkness
Your face shone:
A lantern of love
Hanging high
In the quietness
Of my solitude.

II.

They were entrance lights,
Your soft and sea-calm eyes—
Entrance lights
To a harbor
Full of unuttered love.
I followed them—
They bade me enter.

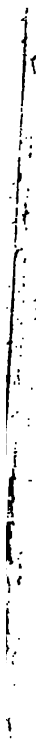


PART TWO

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CRITICISM

You would circumscribe
My song
Within the esoteric circle
Of your tradition—
While I would sing
As the sun sings,
When it brings forth
The fragrance of violets
Or the stench of wasting death.

ROADS

The undulant road
With the elbow bends
Wakes the beyond
And shortens the way;
The straightaway road
That ends at the sky,
Stonebruises my spirit
And mires my strength.

FEAR

O introspective pools,
Brackish with indifference!
Why did you seek this quarried recess?
Did you tire of the swift-flowing current
That rides the obstructing rocks?

PRESENCE

Through endlessly wearisome days
I pan gold in the canyon's streams—
My soul an eroded desolation
With nought but ironic echoes of love
Tattling in its emptiness;
But at night your hovering soul
Is the open-hearted back-log
Into which I look and dream.

WITHOUT

Last night I loitered
Down your garden path;
My veins were full of dreams—
Quivering lightning
Below the horizon . . .
I envied the garden rain pools
That reflected your lighted windows!

UNDERNEATH

O waves vicing with waves,
Do you struggle for the serenity
Of the waveless deep
Where surface happenings
Are mirrored only
In dim, uncertain shadows?

THE BLIND

He let the swift-running years go by
Like streaks of light in a paling fence;
When the years began to limp along,
He had but fenced-in memories
Of the painted toys of childhood
He dragged on a grocer's string,
And the stones he kicked along the road
Until they were lost in the weeds by the
way.

HIROSHIGE

My lonely love-stript thought
Is a cold tree-shadow, wrought
On the snow by the moon;
But your coming will bring
The tree-shadows of Spring.

PAGES

The Winter-wheat fields
Are ruled, unwritten pages
Where God writes in the meaning.
The denuded hillsides
Are ruled, unwritten pages
That could not hold the word.

MARIONNETTES

In the doorway
Of a vacant store
A toyman was listlessly dancing
Painted toys
On an invisible string;
And crowds were listlessly passing,
Puppets of Life's invisible
"Why."

BROADWAY

The night sky stretched like an awning,
Across from cornice to cornice.

There was wonder in the heart of the
moon

Seeking these crevices of day,
To find that her luminous truth was
dimmed

By the gospel of blinking signs.

THE BATTLEFIELD

I. THE MOON'S VIEW

The moon broods over the battlefield,—
But can she know
What it means,
This labyrinth of zigzag corridors,
The millions of faces—
The frail hopes crossing them
Frail as the clouds
That cross her face?

II. HER VIEW

She slept
Utterly worn,
Yet in her dreams
Ceaselessly searching
She followed
The labyrinth
Of the moon-lit trenches.

FEAR-DREAMS

The inevitable spinnings
Of fate
Have close woven my spirit,
That tears and blood
May not penetrate—
But the meshes open
In sleep
And let in
Fear-dreams
For you.

PEASANT THOUGHT

They may in their hearts
Ask "Why?"
But their faces are
Stolid and silent . . .
—Buffaloes
Facing with lowered heads
The blizzards
Of the plains.

REIMS

"Shoot!
That is not God's temple,
It is the enemy's temple:
We can destroy their faith
With shrapnel!"

But God gave no sign.

OUTWARD BOUND

The hawsers are straining
At the mooring post.
Her arms ache
With the parting
Like the last give of ropes.
Her straining eyes
Follow . . . follow . . .

AFTERMATH.

Oh, rock bases of humanity,
Will you emerge
Tame,
Tame as out-cropping stones
That sun themselves
After the storm?

Or will you burst forth
Volcano-like,
Ghastly white with the heat of things,
And force deep-throated destiny
To proclaim the solving word?

KULTUR

In our little room
The little canary
Full of song,
Is flying about;
His cage stands empty.

Why does he seek
His cage again—
Is the room so big a world?
Is freedom
To him,
Just the freedom
To sing?

MOODS AND MOMENTS

*With never a thought of the path it took,
Wandering along, the little brook
Came to a precipice to look.*

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VERNAL IMPULSE

Startled,
The lovers peer out
From their trysting place,
Like fallow deer,
A look of conscious oneness
In their eyes.

SPRING BEAUTIES

I see green fields
In the faint flush of spring;
And little children playing
Are clustered like patches
Of white flowers.

VISION

To live at sea,
And not surrender
To its monotony,
We must vision at will
The islands,
And the long green shores.

MARCH

On the green hill-side
Are patches of spring beauties—
Lingerings of snow;
Underneath
Lie folded violets—
Tiny fragments of sky.

WALT WHITMAN

I,
An arrogant oak
In midfield,
Branching
With every impulse.

I,
Broad-chested,
Gigantic—
In thought
Fusing the immediate
With the infinite.

A WHALER'S SEA CALL

Over for ever
My lusty whaling days!
Sea whitened,
Beached I lie
In a land-locked cove . . .
But oh, when memory quickens
With the song of
Siren waves!

VERSES TO A CHILD

I.

Little one that has gone,
Do you hear the rain drops?
The falling of tears?
The patter of song-birds' feet?

II.

Hard by your little home
Carved in the clay,
The bell tolls,
Telling of another dead:
Are you glad to have him come to you,
Or sad that he leaves the earth?

OUR SON JACK

Our son Jack,
Wild with life,
Went through
When law and nature
Said "Go around."

Thus he died.

THE BEACH

The chill clung to the water;
A bevy of boys,
In naked beauty,
Venturesome,
Shivering,
Shy with wonderment,
Huddled into themselves,
Like street sparrows,
On snowy mornings.

CHILD EYES

Bits of us,
Peering out
From child eyes:
What more is immortality?

ON THE NEXT PAGE WILL BE
FOUND ANNOUNCEMENTS OF
OTHER BOOKS OF VERSE ISSUED
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